

Chairwoman Deb Haaland
Remarks on the UC package
July 29, 2020

Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this markup today and for including several bills that I'm particularly proud of.

One of those is the Simplifying Outdoor Access for Recreation Act.

I'm grateful to you, Ranking Member, Bishop, and my co-lead on the SOAR Act, Representative Curtis, for working together with me and with stakeholders to improve the bill as it has moved through the process.

The amended bill that we are passing today incorporates elements of Ranking Member Bishop's Recreation, Not Red Tape Act and will improve recreational opportunities on our public lands.

High demand for using our public lands and complex permitting requirements stretch agency resources thin and create barriers that make it difficult for outdoor leaders to get permission to take people to our public lands.

The SOAR Act will make it easier for outfitters and guides to work with federal agencies, prioritize recreation on our public lands, and promote access for those who benefit the most from outdoor experiences, such as urban populations, low-income families, underserved or at-risk communities, and servicemembers and veterans.

We're also passing the Senate companion to my bill the Native American Business Incubators Program Act.

This bill aims to support entities that incubate and mentor Tribes and Native American entrepreneurs working to start and grow new businesses.

It will do so by creating a business incubators grant program within the Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development that will support the establishment and operation of business incubators that are tailored to meeting Indian Country's unique needs and take into account Tribes' sovereign status.

Finally, we are considering the Land Grant and Acequia Traditional Use Recognition and Consultation Act, a bill that I co-sponsored with my good friend Rep. Ben Ray Luján.

In my home state of New Mexico, acequias and land grants have long played a critical role in our way of life, practicing traditional methods of stewardship over our land and water.

But for more than a century, these communities have fought for recognition and access to their historic communal lands.

This bill will provide enhanced access and consultation between federal land management agencies and land grants and acequias, and I am pleased that we are moving this bill that is essential to maintaining their way of life.

Thank you again for working with me on these important bills, and I yield back my time.